



WINTER 2015

SKAGIT UPDATE

NEWSLETTER OF THE SKAGIT LAND TRUST

Cumberland Creek Returns Home

By Jim Johnson, Cumberland Creek Land Steward

On the morning of September 25 at about 9:30 A.M., Cumberland Creek was returned to its historic channel, restoring 4,000 feet of fish habitat. It was, for all of us perched on the creek bank, a surprisingly exciting moment. All, I suppose, felt the residual childhood joy of playing with running water. But hopes and expectations were also stirring. We wanted the efforts of Skagit Land Trust and partners to pay off, yet uncertainty mingled with and heightened our creek-side camaraderie.



"That uncertainty will keep alive our initial excitement and feels oddly right; there is an element of wildness at play here."



ABOVE: Eighty years ago Cumberland Creek became unnaturally diverted and shortened, losing a great deal of its salmon habitat. By reconnecting the creek to its historic channel, fish and wildlife gain back more than 3/4 miles of critical high-quality habitat.

LEFT: A Bridge to Habitat: Volunteer Land Steward Jim Johnson, who long advocated for the reconnection of Cumberland Creek, stands with Stewardship Director Michael Kirshenbaum beneath a bridge spanning the restored creek which provides access to the 211-acre land trust conservation area and its public trails.

Would Cumberland Creek stay in its newly assigned channel or would it cut through the woods eroding shrubs and topping (cont.)

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Trust Members and Partners,



Hearing and seeing the ribbons of geese and swans flying over our rooftops is a true Skagit marker of fall. How lucky we are to call Skagit home. We've had another wonderful season of conservation activity and we have 12 projects to save more land in the works! Your support makes every day at the Trust rewarding. Thank you.

In this newsletter you'll find announcements for our winter & early spring events. Whether you like getting your hands dirty by launching young trees on their journey to old growth, or sipping champagne with people who also love the Skagit while bidding on unique items in support of saving land, there is something here for you.

Our Annual Meeting on January 15th will be at the Fidalgo Bay Resort. This is very apt. Skagit Land Trust holds the conservation easement on 530 acres of Fidalgo Bay. Have you ever wondered how we decided Fidalgo Bay needed to be permanently protected? After all, it has a highway on one side, two refineries on another and a city on the third boundary - and yet it was, and remains, a conservation priority. The presentation at our Annual Meeting, *It's All Connected*, will lay out our Conservation Strategy and tell the story of the land ethic from which it comes. Based on science and local knowledge, our Strategy helps us identify what we think needs to be conserved for a resilient and sustainable Skagit far into the future. The Trust's conservation staff will team up with Tim Manns, former head naturalist for North Cascades National Park, to present our updated Conservation Strategy and the century old roots from which an interconnected land ethic was derived.

In closing, I want to recognize two board members who are rotating off the board. Bob Boudinot joined the Trust in 2005 and Ron Feld in 2006. Bob has served many roles including board president. His legacy includes keeping the Trust on sound financial footing through the recession, moving us into a new home and guiding us through thousands of acres of protection and stewardship. Bob will remain on our Stewardship Committee and you may see him as a land steward. Ron has chaired our Governance Committee for many years and recently helped guide the update of our strategic direction. Among a long list of accomplishments, one we all note is his ability to keep us in good cheer. Both Bob and Ron have given us so much camaraderie, joy, common sense, time and energy that this small paragraph does no justice. We thank them deeply for their service.

Molly Doran

Continued from page one

trees? When, if ever, would salmon colonize it and begin returning marine nutrients to the stream bed and the surrounding woods? When would their nest – or “redd” – building begin to loosen gravel and make even better places for more nesting? How much of Cumberland Creek’s flow would even reach the Skagit River or would, in time of drought, that flow be mostly below the surface in the sandy, well-drained soils underling most of the Cumberland ?



What is certain is that the stream will evolve and that it will do so under a regimen of climate change with reduced stream flows in summer, greater flows in winter resulting in increased scouring, siltation and warmer water temperatures. Even so, we know that freshwater insects will return and heron and kingfisher will hunt the stream’s lower reaches. Mink and otter may hunt here too and beaver may find new gnawing grounds along its banks.

The work to restore Cumberland Creek is the right thing to have done even though we can’t be sure how things will unfold. That uncertainty will keep alive our initial excitement and feels oddly right; there is an element of wildness at play here. The Pre-Socratic philosopher Heraclitus, believing constant change to be at the heart of the universe, said famously “You cannot step twice in the same river . . .” If you don’t believe him, come up to Cumberland Creek and wade for a while.

The Cumberland Creek Peninsula is on the Skagit River, across from the town of Hamilton. Beginning in 2005, many partners have contributed to the conservation and stewardship of this place important for wildlife, fish and people. Cumberland Creek was re-routed out of its historic channel about 80 years ago. This restoration project is a partnership between the Trust and the Army Corps of Engineers, Skagit County, Seattle City Light, the Skagit River System Cooperative and others.

Jim Johnson has been the volunteer Land Steward at the Cumberland Creek Conservation Area since 2005.

TRAIL NEWS

We heard you! You told us you love to help save nature and you also want to have places to get out and enjoy it. We are working with Skagit County Parks to try to secure one of the final pieces for the future Centennial Trail phase I from Big Rock to Clear Lake along the edge of our Barney Lake Conservation Area. We are also working with the County and Deception Pass State Park to connect this park with the Anacortes Community Forest Lands via the future “Tursi Trail”. These are examples of our **Connecting People to Nature** element in our updated Conservation Strategy.



Earn Funds for Land While Shopping

Link your Fred Meyer Rewards Card to Skagit Land Trust at www.fredmeyer.com/communityrewards. You can search for Skagit Land Trust by name or by number 85396. Then, every time you shop and use your Rewards Card, you are helping conserve Skagit’s natural lands!



PLEASE JOIN US FOR OUR 23RD ANNUAL MEMBERS MEETING

Thursday, January 15th, 2015, 5:30 - 8:00pm
Fidalgo Bay Resort, 4701 Fidalgo Bay Road, Anacortes



5:30 - 6:30pm: Social hour, appetizers and refreshments
6:30 - 7:15pm: Awards, Board elections, by-law revisions and updates
7:15 - 8:00pm: Presentation - *It's All Connected* - Tim Manns and Skagit Land Trust conservation staff.

What do places people love, climate change, groundwater, frogs and Aldo Leopold have in common? They are all part of our Conservation Strategy. Tim Manns, former head naturalist for North Cascades National Park, and Skagit Land Trust's conservation staff will explain how the history of conservation from over a century ago is helping the Trust decide what needs to be saved today. Check our website, www.skagitlandtrust.org for more information and by-law revisions.

Welcome **Lisa Miller**,
Community Engagement Assistant

Lisa joined the Trust in September to help engage our community through events, communications, and volunteer recruitment. She completed the Masters in Environmental Horticulture program at the University of Washington and has a diverse background in ecological restoration, volunteer leadership and client services.

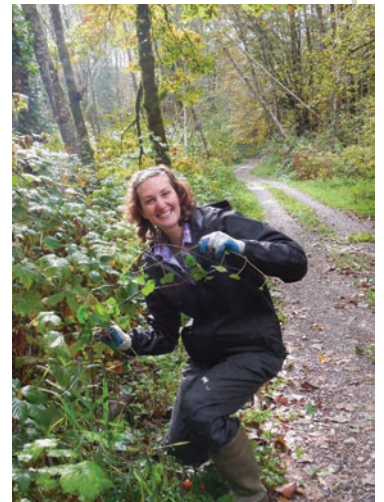
Favorite Skagit spot: Skagit River delta in Skagit Bay for Bald Eagle and Osprey watching

Favorite ice cream flavor: Honey Cinnamon



Welcome
Kay Anagnostou,
*AmeriCorps
Volunteer
Coordinator*

Kay comes to the Trust as our 8th AmeriCorps service member with previous conservation experience as an AmeriCorps member with the Montana Conservation Corps and as a stewardship intern with Idaho's Wood River Land Trust. Kay coordinates volunteers and organizes stewardship work parties at our conservation areas across Skagit County.



Favorite Skagit spot: Any place with fly fishing potential

Favorite ice cream flavor: Pistachio

SAVE THE DATE

9th Annual Have Fun, Save Land Dinner & Auction

Saturday, March 7, 2015 5 - 9pm
St Joseph Center, Mount Vernon

Join us for our largest - and most fun - fundraiser of the year! All proceeds help conserve Skagit's natural lands today and for the future. Can you help make this a successful evening? Contact auction@skagitlandtrust.org or call 360-428-7878.

WATCH FOR YOUR INVITATION IN THE MAIL

"Subversive" Savior

The life and legacy of Hildegard Kretschmer

History was always of great interest to Dr. Hildegard Kretschmer, who passed away this summer at the age of 98 at her home just east of Sedro Woolley. As a German who lived through the rise and fall of the Hitler regime while maintaining her devout dedication to helping others, she *was* history herself.

Hildegard was arrested in 1935 as a "subversive" by Nazi officials and sent to a labor camp. After her release, she worked as an au pair and language tutor in France and England and returned to Germany in 1939 where she worked as an interpreter until the Allies liberated her village in April of 1945. Having witnessed such turmoil and human suffering, Hildegard chose to pursue medical studies to help people thrive. She became a psychiatric resident and her career eventually brought her to work at Northern State Hospital in 1963, introducing this savior to our little pocket of heaven here in the Skagit Valley.

Hildegard loved the Pacific Northwest and felt at home with trees, mountains and rivers. On her 14-acre property, she cared deeply about preserving the forest for wildlife and planted over 1,500 trees there herself. In 1999, Hildegard donated a conservation easement to Skagit Land Trust, permanently conserving this special place. Hildegard also willed the property to the Trust in her estate plans and the property will remain forever protected per her wishes. The mature forest of towering cedars and firs stands tall on the hillside above the F&S Grade Rd. as a place that was cared for and has been protected forever, thanks to the generosity and hard work of one person. Many of us had learned from her the ethereal art of stewardship and importance of leaving a legacy of wonder for those to come.

We will miss you, Hildegard.



LEAVE IT TO NATURE, FOREVER



If you wish to make a lasting gift to the environment, to your community, and to future generations, please consider a bequest or planned gift to Skagit Land Trust. Bequests and planned gifts not only assist the natural world, the community and the work of Skagit Land Trust, but the method of giving you choose may offer financial benefits to you and your family. We suggest that you discuss any planned gift with your attorney, accountant, or other financial advisors. If you wish us to protect your land forever through donating your property or a conservation easement, we strongly suggest that you contact us first to discuss your wishes. To request the Trust's Guide to Planned Giving or discuss a gift, contact Molly Doran, Executive Director at (360) 428-7878 or mollyd@skagitlandtrust.org.



YOU CAN ALSO DOWNLOAD THE GUIDE TO PLANNED GIVING AT: SKAGITLANDTRUST.ORG



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MISSION STATEMENT:

Skagit Land Trust conserves wildlife habitat, agricultural and forest lands, scenic open space and shorelines for the benefit of our community and as a legacy for future generations.

SAVING LAND FOR TOMORROW

Upcoming Events

Annual Members Meeting, Thursday, January 15th

5:30 - 8:00pm, Fidalgo Bay Resort,
4701 Fidalgo Bay Road, Anacortes

January and February - dates TBD

- Guemes Mountain trail maintenance volunteer event
- Barney Lake/Bell property tree planting volunteer event

Saturday, March 7

9th Annual Dinner & Auction, 5 - 9pm,
St Joseph Center, Mount Vernon

Visit our website www.skagitlandtrust.org for details and other upcoming events.

BELOW: TEAM RIC CAME OUT IN FULL FORCE TO OUR GREEN ROAD MARSH IN MID-NOVEMBER TO HELP PLANT TREES AND RESTORE THIS CONSERVATION AREA AND TO HONOR THE LONGTIME SERVICE RIC BOGE HAS GIVEN TO OUR COMMUNITY AND THE NATURAL WORLD.

RIGHT: CLAIRE SEE COLLECTS TREE POTS AFTER A DAY'S WORK.

